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abrics and Designs

CHILDREN'S CLOTHES

FARMERS' BULLETIN NO. 1778

CONTENTS

																	PAGE
FABR	ics .							•			٠.	•			•		4
3AR1	MEN	Т	DÈ	SIGI	NS									•		•	4
wor	KMA	N	SHI	Ρ.	٠										•		5
LABE	ELS (NC	· F	ABR:	ICS	ANI	R	EAD	Y-M.	ADI	G G	ARM	EN	TS			5
LIPS	AN	D	SLE	EPI	NG	GAR	ME	NTS	FOR	. IN	FAI	STV		•			6
ROM	PERS	F	OR	CR	EEF	ING	ВА	BIES									9
UITS	S AN	1D	DI	RESS	ES												12
OUTI	ITS	FC	R	SUM	IME	ER									٠,		15
WIN'	TER	Pl	LAY	SUI	TS	AND	н	EAD	VEA	R							18
se.	T. E-14	FT	D	BIB	E	7 R	N S7	MAT.1	CE	111.1	n .						23

Washington, D. C., October 1937

This bulletin is a revision of and supersedes Leaflets No. 52, Suits for the Small Boy; No. 63, Ensembles for Sunny Days; No. 79, Rompers; and No. 80, Dresses for Little Girls.

For sale by Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C Price 5 cents

FABRICS and DESIGNS for CHILDREN'S CLOTHES

by

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FOR SOME YEARS the Bureau of Home Economics has been studying fabrics and designs for children's clothing in response to two widespread demands.

Both producers and consumers are seeking new and better ways of utilizing fabrics made of cotton and wool, the textile fibers of great importance to American agriculture. Cotton is particularly well adapted to garments that must be laundered frequently and are soon outgrown and must be replaced. For outer wraps and other purposes where warmth is needed without excessive weight and bulk, wool is desirable.

The more recent scientific approach to child care and training has focused attention on the special clothing needs of children. Particularly for infants and young children, clothes are found to have pronounced effect on health and habit formation.

The sunsuit, for example, follows the discovery that the ultraviolet rays in sunlight shining directly on the body aid in preventing and curing rickets. Self-help features are incorporated in many garments to encourage initiative and self-reliance in early childhood. The modern one-piece protective playsuit, which enables a child to play actively out of doors for long periods in all kinds of weather, is the result of careful study of fabric and garment design. Even colorful outdoor clothes that make children more visible to the motorist are of value in preventing traffic accidents.

All of the garments pictured in this bulletin have been designed in the Bureau of Home Economics. They were first made up experimentally and then, in cooperation with mothers and nursery-school teachers, tried out on children. Many of the most popular designs have been reproduced by commercial pattern companies and so made available to the general public. The Bureau itself has no patterns for distribution. It has, however, arranged to lend traveling exhibits of the actual garments to extension groups, child clinics, and nursery-school centers.

The principles of fabric selection and garment design are outlined here as helps in making children's clothes at home and in buying ready-made garments.

FABRICS

Many kinds of cotton fabrics are appropriate for preschool children's clothing, but certain qualities are needed in all children's garments. Because of a child's small size, material should be yielding and flexible if play is to be free and unhampered. Also because a child's skin is sensitive and easily irritated by anything prickly or harsh, only fabrics of soft, smooth texture are comfortable, and they have the added advantage of not wrinkling easily. Firm, even weaves with no loose yarns are needed to withstand the wear of play and frequent launderings. However, durability must not be confused with weight. Often the lightweight materials wear just as well as the heavier ones and are much less tiring to a child.

If the colors of all washable fabrics used in children's clothing are fast to washing and to sunlight, they will look well as long as the garment is wearable. Colors should also be chosen for their attractiveness and suitability to a child's age, size, and personality.

Gay colors are a protection to children under present-day traffic conditions. A child in a colorful garment is much more easily seen by a motorist than one in an outfit of somber color that blends into the roadway.

The materials for children's garments should be so thoroughly shrunk as to insure the same fit after washing as before. Excessive shrinkage only adds to the difficulty of keeping garments large enough for a rapidly growing child.

Since neither the possible shrinkage nor the colorfastness can be determined by looking at fabrics, only those that carry definite printed labels in regard to these qualities can be depended on to give satisfaction.

GARMENT DESIGNS

IN ORDER to be comfortable, every type of garment for a child, from the first slips to dresses, suits, and playsuits, must be properly cut and fitted. A little child is very active and needs clothes of roomy design and with special features that allow the most extreme body movements. Such garments encourage play and look well when the child is either still or in action.

Clothes that permit the freest movement also allow for growth. Certain adjustments, however, such as lengthening, cannot be avoided, and allowances for these can often be inconspicuously worked into the design.

Closely related to comfort are conveniences that make dressing quick and easy. Babies often become fretful with too much handling. Therefore clothes for infants and very young children should have generous plackets, conveniently placed so that they can be fastened quickly.

For the older child who is beginning to show an interest in self-help, dressing features should be planned for his rather than for his mother's convenience. Clothes simple in design so that they cannot possibly be

put on wrong, plackets in front, and fastenings easy to manage, encourage a child to develop self-reliance and skill.

WORKMANSHIP

ALL CLOTHES for children have to be well made to withstand the severe strain, hard wear, and frequent laundering that they are certain to get. To do this and at the same time to insure comfort, seams and finishes should be narrow, flat, smooth, and pliable. The kind of construction is determined by the particular garment, the material, and the kind of wear it will be given. In general, thread should always match the fabric in strength and color. Stitching needs to be close and properly adjusted, and reinforcements are a protection for places likely to be strained.

LABELS ON FABRICS AND READY-MADE GARMENTS

LABELS and tags of all sorts, some bearing information helpful to the purchaser and some only for sales appeal, are attached to many ready-mades as well as to yard goods.

Of particular value are the labels giving definite and complete statements about colorfastness and shrinkage. For example, "colorfast to sun and washing" tells definitely what can be expected, as does "will not shrink more than 2 percent." In contrast, terms such as "colorfast" or "preshrunk" leave room for question. Fabrics so labeled are likely to be fast only to washing, and probably will shrink more when laundered.

Tags often call attention to self-help features, but it is unwise to buy without first noting carefully their actual worth. Some are practical, and some are not. Also, because self-help is now considered a good selling point and likely to be overemphasized, other features of more importance are in danger of being overlooked. Self-help clothes are not necessarily comfortable. A garment may be easy to put on and take off, yet most uncomfortable to wear. So in selecting patterns and ready-mades consider the points that count most for the child's good. Comfort comes first—after that, convenience.

Size labels are attached to all clothes for children. However, at present there is no standard or uniform system of sizing, nor are the dimensions based on any scientific study of body measurements. Three-year-olds may require garments labeled 6 or larger. Another reason for not relying entirely on size labels is that children of the same age may vary considerably in proportions. Then again, some ready-made clothing is skimped; that is, cut down in size and with very little seam allowance, so that the yardage may produce the greatest possible number of garments. The only safe way of determining correct size is to try on the clothes and check the fit of every part.

SLIPS AND SLEEPING GARMENTS FOR INFANTS

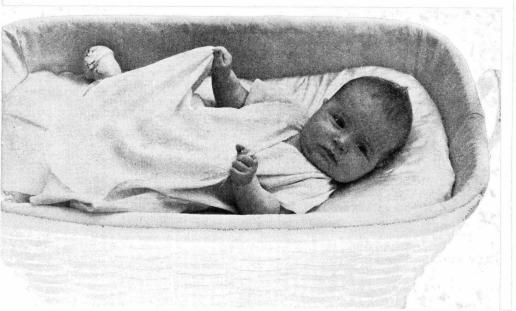
PROTECTION, freedom for activity, comfort, and allowance for growth over a period of 5 or 6 months are the first points to consider when selecting an infant's clothes.

The kind and amount of protection that a young baby needs naturally depend on the season of the year, the climate, and the temperature maintained in the house. For that reason, what is ample protection for one baby is not necessarily right for another. However, the difference is chiefly in warmth of materials rather than in garment design, and so advice of this kind should come from the physician.

Slips and gowns designed to allow for exercise and growth are shown on this and the following page. Slips for daytime wear are too length and wide at the lower edge so as to permit a baby to kick and develop his leg and body muscles. His arms and shoulders are equally free in sleeves of a roomy raglan style cut short if the temperature permits, otherwise long and adjustable at the wrists. Slips of this type also make it possible to use more or less underwear as needed without interfering with the comfortable fit of the clothes.

Bias, rather than straight-cut, slips have certain advantages. They spread in whichever direction there is need of extra room, and they require no set-in fullness in the form of gathers or tucks, which may leave an imprint on the delicate skin of a baby. Better, too, are the flat and smoothly finished neck lines rather than those with lace, knotty embroidery, and collars. Decorative finishes of this sort irritate a baby's chin, and collars cup about the face so that the corners are pushed into the mouth.

In choosing materials for infants' clothes, texture and weight are especially important. The fabrics should be soft, smooth, and very



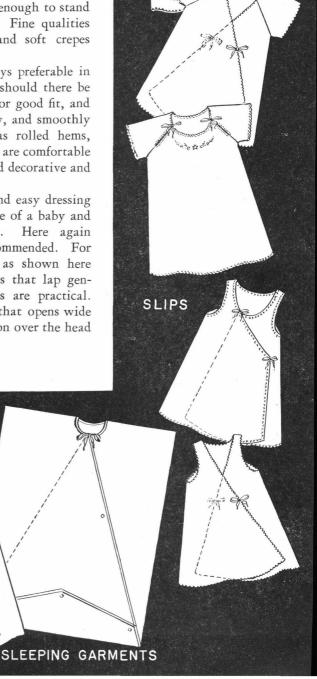
supple, yet sufficiently firm in weave so that they will not soon become limp and rumpled. They should also be light in weight. Very young babies are quick to sense even a slight feeling of heaviness in their clothing and are not so active as when lightly dressed.

From both the practical and hygienic standpoints, suitable materials have to be easy to cleanse thoroughly yet durable enough to stand up under frequent laundering. Fine qualities of nainsook, lawn, batiste, and soft crepes meet these requirements.

Simple workmanship is always preferable in infants' wear. In no garment should there be more seams than are essential for good fit, and these should be flexible, narrow, and smoothly finished. Such edge finishes as rolled hems, narrow bindings, and shell edge are comfortable for the baby and yet durable and decorative and no trouble to launder.

Clothes designed for quick and easy dressing and undressing simplify the care of a baby and prevent unnecessary handling. Here again loose-fitting garments are recommended. For everyday wear the bias slips as shown here with full-length front openings that lap generously and prevent ugly gaps are practical. For special occasions, the slip that opens wide at the top so it can be slipped on over the head quickly is neater in appearance.

7



Tie fastenings of very narrow cotton twistless tape with the ends tightly wrapped and stitched with thread to stiffen them are generally preferable to tiny buttons. The tapes wear well, are easy to manage, and cause no trouble in washing and ironing; but a baby's fingers do sometimes catch in the loops and untie them.

The points about slips apply also to infants' nightgowns, but they should be longer than daytime slips so as to protect the feet. Gowns measuring about 28 inches from shoulder to hem are usually long enough. The lower edge should be left open or else closed with a boxing, rather than pulled up with a drawstring. If a drawstring is used, the gown should be very long so it can be pushed up to give the baby plenty of foot room.

The material in gowns, unlike that for daytime slips, needs to be absorbent without feeling cold. Bird's-eye is more absorbent than the widely used outing flannel. For times when a cooler material than either of these is desired, the new sheer diaper fabric can be used.

In very cold weather, sleeping bags are more protective than gowns. The design illustrated on the preceding page is suitable either as a sleeping garment or as a protector when going away from home. It can be opened out practically flat when the baby is put into it; then the front is lapped and closed in envelope fashion. Both the hands and feet are protected yet not restricted if care is taken to get a fabric that is warm but not heavy. Outing flannel is satisfactory when the bag is a substitute for a nightgown. For other occasions a light washable woolen of soft texture, napped inside, is warmer and more pleasing in appearance.

The following features of design and construction are shown in these garments that are comfortable for babies to wear and convenient for their mothers to manage:

Designs that allow for activity and growth.

Smooth fit through the shoulders with no bulky fullness to lie on.

Wide raglan sleeves, short in length or long and adjustable at the wrists. Flat, smoothly finished, loose-fitting neck lines.

Convenient closing that simplifies dressing so there is no unnecessary handling of the baby.

Fastenings easy to manage and not troublesome to launder.

As few seam lines as essential to good fit.

Hand finishing for softness and flexibility of workmanship.

Easy and quick to launder neatly.

Economical and simple to make at home.

Materials of very soft, fine texture; and for gowns, absorbent also.

White or delicate pastel colors guaranteed fast to light and washing. Slips, toe length or about 20 inches; gowns, about 28 inches.

ROMPERS FOR CREEPING BABIES

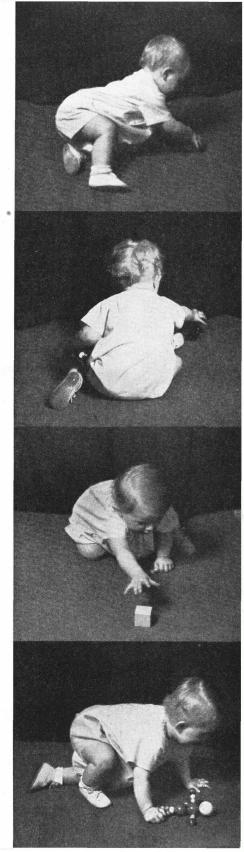
THE BABY who is creeping or learning to walk needs a special type of garment. It should allow him the greatest possible freedom for making long reaches, trying first steps, and getting around on hands and knees.

Rompers meet these requirements if they are designed, cut, and fitted so that there is extra room exactly where it is needed. For example, a bias cut, or little pleats or gathers set in at the shoulders and at the bend of the hips, give spread and length. Leg openings, if curved high and round at the front, fit comfortably and do not drop over the knees. Looseness without bagginess throughout the body of the garment gives a feeling of freedom that encourages activity.

Unfortunately not many rompers are designed for a creeping child. The back and front are practically the same in length and width. This means that as the baby creeps either the back of the rompers will be too short and tight, or else the front will be so long that it slips down over the knees. Either can be very restricting and uncomfortable.

The only sure way of getting rompers that fit properly is to try them on the baby. Then width, length, and placement of special design features can be checked and misfits avoided. Like older children, babies of the same age vary in body proportions.

Rompers also need to be designed so that they can be slipped on and off easily and quickly. A baby at this age is too young to assist himself in dressing, as he will a little later. Two good types for him are a coat style that buttons down the full length of the front, or a slipover that opens wide and has few fastenings. Rompers that cannot be put on without a struggle or that have



numerous tiny buttons in places difficult to fasten are exasperating to both mother and baby.

To facilitate the changing of diapers, the lower back of the romper may be extended and shaped so that it can be pulled up between the legs and buttoned well over the front. The sketches on this page show closings of

this type.

Babies at the creeping age are very difficult to keep clean, and frequent changes are necessary. If the style of the romper is such that it can be slipped on and off an ironing board without trouble and if the fabric is suitable, then the task is much less burdensome. When there are fussy little collars, puffed sleeves with cuffs, and belts, the rompers are easily rumpled, and it takes considerable time to iron them neatly. Besides, clothes of this type add nothing to a baby's comfort or appearance. Real attractiveness comes from a comfortably cut garment of becoming color and a clean, well-kept appearance.

Cottons are the best all-around materials for rompers. There are many kinds and qualities from which to choose, such as finely woven broadcloth, gingham, lawn, and nainsook. Soft, flexible fabrics respond

readily to a baby's movements, and

smooth unnapped surfaces do not collect soil. Also, choose thoroughly shrunk cottons. With a growing baby it is difficult at best to keep rompers long enough from the neck line to the crotch without adding the troubles that result from unshrunk fabrics.

Resistance to wrinkling is another fabric quality of special importance in rompers. Materials especially treated and sold as "crease-resistant" are as yet too expensive for this use, but there is considerable difference even in the common types. Before buying, crumple the different fabrics in the hand and choose those that wrinkle least.

In rompers, all seams should be narrow, flat, and smooth. Finishes that are accurately shaped to fit the neck, leg openings, and sleeves help to keep the shape of a garment and make it easier to iron. The stitching should be close, straight, and of proper strength for the fabric, and the trim such that it will last as long as the material in the romper. Also the buttonholes should keep their shape and stay fastened. They have to stand much fastening and unfastening, and no baby can be tidy in appearance, or comfortable, if the diaper flaps on his rompers come open and hang in his way.

Colors that are becoming and suitable for a baby are easy to find. In general, those best for this age are tints, slightly more colorful than for infants' slips, yet not so deep as are appropriate for a child a little older. Light blue, pink, green, and yellow are suitable, depending on the baby's coloring. As a rule, prints are not so attractive as plain tints, but, if desired, there are available small allover designs suited to a baby's size.

Rompers designed by this Bureau and illustrating desirable features are shown on the two preceding pages. When buying either patterns for making rompers at home or ready-made garments, check the following points:

Comfortable length both front and back from neck to crotch, with shoulders so fitted as to help keep the garment in place.

Loose-fitting, flat-finished neck line cut comfortably low at the front. Convenient openings for dressing and for changing the diaper.

Secure, washable buttons and buttonholes of a size easy to manage.

Leg openings cut high and round at the front, so they will not slip down over the knees and hinder creeping.

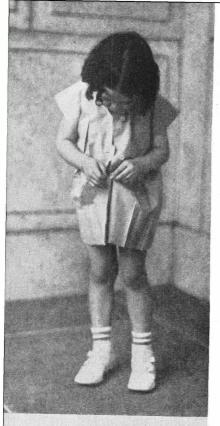
Pleats, gathers, or bias cut that will give spread through the chest and shoulders.

Roomy armholes and sleeves as short as the temperature permits.

Loose fitting about the body.

Enough extra length set in at the hip line to allow for comfortable creeping.

Soft, smooth fabrics that do not collect soil readily.





Before Planning or selecting suits and dresses, watch children at play. Notice good and bad points in what they have on, then choose clothes that encourage the running, climbing, squatting, and jumping that make up the activity of a normal child. Good designs have "action" features, such as raglan sleeves that permit long, high reaches, seats with extra length and spread for squatting, and shoulders with small tucks or gathers set in for give. In addition, the garment must fit the individual child; otherwise good points of design may be lost.

Growth must be considered as well as activity. Clothes with looseness or fullness adjust themselves to a growing child, and make it possible to buy garments that fit comfortably from the beginning. Those that must be grown into rarely, if ever, feel right or look right. Moreover, clothes that are too large can be just as restrictive and harmful as those that are too small. Certain allowances for growth, particularly in length, always have to be provided. In little girls' dresses, 6- or 8-inch hems are none too much to allow. In boys' blouses, an allowance of 5 or 6 inches below the button level provides



12



for growth and also keeps the tail from working out.

Modern methods of child training emphasize the educational value of clothing that children can take off and put on with little or no help.

In dresses and suits, plackets at the front within easy reach, and fastenings few in number and of a type that a young child can manage, encourage self-help.

Medium-sized buttons, round, flat, and with a slight groove that keep fingers from slipping off, are generally the easiest for children to manage. Very large or very small buttons, snaps, and hooks and eyes are too difficult.

Slide fasteners are easy if properly used. They need to suit the design as well as the weight of the fabric in the garment. For example, as the front closing in a boy's one-piece suit or a girl's tailored dress, a slide fastener may be satisfactory, but in the blouse of a two-piece suit such a fastening only complicates dressing. The blouse must then be pulled on over the head, whereas the usual two-piece suit may have its trousers and waist so buttoned together that it can be slipped into as easily as if it were one piece. Metallic fasteners also need to be protected so they will not catch the underclothing or injure the skin.







The back drops of both suits and panties may be arranged so that a young child can fasten and unfasten them. If the plackets slant somewhat to the side back, only two buttons are required instead of the usual four or five.

In boys' two-piece suits the usual troublesome separate belt can well be omitted if facings with tab ends that simulate a belt are substituted. Then the back of the trousers can be buttoned over the front rather than the front over the back. Also these tabs are easy for a child to hold to while fastening the side buttons. And, if the back is further supported by buttons at the side back, and none at center back, the whole arrangement is simplified.

Fabrics for suits and dresses should complement the designs and aid in bringing out a child's good points. Colorfast, thoroughly preshrunk percale, lawn, gingham, and fine broadcloth are satisfactory because they do not collect soil readily or wrinkle easily. If they have a permanent finish, that does away with the need of starching.

For young children, colors may be gay. Prints are becoming and practical for little girls, but care has to be taken to choose those that are small in size.

Since children's clothes are chiefly wash garments, workmanship needs to be of the highest quality. Stitching must be fine, accurately adjusted, and fastened off securely if it is to hold. A slight rip may be the means of a child catching and tearing his clothes beyond repair.

At points where some strain is inevitable, such as at placket ends, through the crotch, and at the underarm, reinforcements of tape or double stitching are good protection. Under buttons, such as those that support a boy's trousers, both twilled tape and small stay buttons are needed to prevent tears. Buttonholes also need to be the right size for the buttons and firmly worked, yet pliable for easy handling.

Little or no trim is desirable on clothing for small children. The tendency is to overdecorate, and that detracts from, rather than improves, a child's appearance. If trim seems desirable for accent or finish, choose a type that is simple, flat, and easy to iron, and be sure that it really adds something worth while. A little edge stitchery may bring out a becoming line of construction and at the same time strengthen it. Also, a shaped facing that simulates a collar may make a neck line more becoming.

Trim that is "stuck on", such as an applique bunny or an embroidered nursery-rhyme scene, is in bad taste, and in ready-mades means either increased cost or, more often, lowered quality. Trivial decoration of this sort also gives the child the wrong idea of what is suitable to wear.

Colors and patterns of fabrics always attract first, so study a child's physical characteristics and his personality to determine what is most becoming and what will give the most pleasure.

Children begin to develop color preferences and standards of taste and quality very early. By letting a child have, insofar as possible, what he enjoys, a wholesome pride in appearance is encouraged. Also it lays the basis for good dress in later years.

Suits for small boys designed with the following features are comfortable, convenient, and practical:

Flat-finished neck lines, cut low at the front.

Roomy armholes and short sleeves, preferably raglan in style.

Blouse openings at front.

Trousers with as few fastenings as will give proper support; no separate belt.

Medium-sized, round buttons, slightly grooved so they are easy to grasp.

Buttonholes, firmly worked for hard wear, yet flexible for easy handling. Trouser legs wide enough for comfort, yet close enough for neat appearance when the child sits to play.

Blouses with extra length to provide for moving down buttons as the boy grows.

Material that is sturdy, easy to wash, and not readily wrinkled.

Strong, smoothly finished workmanship, and reinforcements wherever there is likely to be extra strain.

Little girls' dresses, designed by the Bureau, include the following features:

Loose-fitting, collarless neck lines that will allow for comfort and growth.

Opening at the front sufficiently long for the dress to be pulled on without straining its neck line.

Self-help fastenings of a type to suit the style of the dress and the material.

Good-sized armholes and sleeves that allow plenty of arm freedom, even when underwear with sleeves is worn.

Fullness across the back and chest.

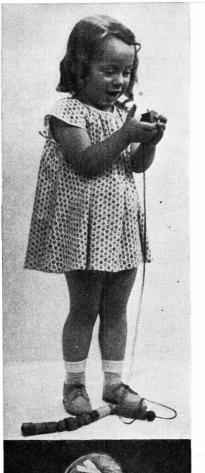
A 6- or 8-inch hem, to allow for letting down.

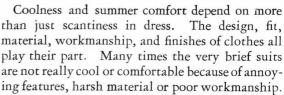
Matching panties cut for comfort, convenience, and neat appearance.

Soft, flexible materials that neither wrinkle nor show soil quickly.

OUTFITS FOR SUMMER

For playtime in hot weather, little children are more comfortable in sunsuits than in any other type of garment. For other times, sun ensembles, as shown on the two following pages, solve the problem. They consist of a sunsuit with an open-weave top plus a matching jacket for a boy or a dress for a girl. Such ensembles are particularly useful when days are hot and evenings and mornings are cool, and for times when the sunsuit is not appropriate. Changing from almost nothing to a hot dress-up outfit is probably harder on a child than grown-ups realize, and is doubtless the cause of much of the away-from-home fretfulness that is so often laid to bad temper.





The simplest hot-weather outfits are the coolest. In general, well-cut, one-piece sunsuits supported from and fitted to the shoulders are best. They must be deeply cut out about the arms, neck, and legs, and for more coolness and exposure to the sun they may even have net tops. However, as protection against too-rapid cooling, they must cover the body.

Looseness throughout the suit allows the air to circulate about the body and so helps to keep a child cool. Belts, close-fitting bands, and tight elastics make a suit warmer. Chiggers, the cause of much discomfort in certain sections, are likely to collect under these tight bands.

Every part of a sunsuit should be cut so that it allows activity without catching and restricting or sliding out of place. Many suits have to be adjusted constantly. Shoulder straps slide off, ill-shaped panties pull up uncomfortably in the crotch, and halter ties do not stay tied. Also there are many suits with bothersome little sashes and ruffles that are not appropriate on hot weather clothes.

Sunsuits, like other types of clothes for children, need to fit comfortably. Too often they are purchased at bargain counters, and the extremely low prices mean skimped and poorly proportioned suits. They may look well enough when the child is standing quietly, but rarely are they made with enough length in the back to give room for squatting.

Next in importance to appropriate design and good fit are the materials. They should be soft,



smooth, and cool to the touch. A little handling will soon prove that fabrics differ noticeably in the last quality. Those with even a slight nap feel warm, while others with a soft, slick finish feel cool and are not so likely to cling to the skin when it is damp with perspiration. For the lower part of sunsuits, some of the softer qualities of gingham, percale, and seersucker are satisfactory, and for the tops, coarse-quality curtain marquisette. For the ensembles for little girls, lawns also are attractive.

Workmanship in hot-weather clothes must be strong and lasting to withstand frequent washing and hard wear. Also, because sunsuits are worn next to the skin which is particularly sensitive in hot weather, narrow, smoothly finished seams that feel soft and pliable are most comfortable. Stiff, rigid seams and rough finishes are likely to chafe.

Sunsuits may be more colorful and gay than other garments because they are for outdoor wear. If any decoration is desired, use contrasting binding or flat, shaped facings.

The hot-weather outfits shown here illustrate the following points:

Low cut about the neck and arms, yet high enough in the waist back to keep the shoulders from slipping.

Easy to put on and take off.

Short length and round leg openings that fit comfortably.

Matching dress or jacket for cool mornings or for going away from home.

Fitted shoulders that stay in place.

Looseness through the body and ample spread and length in the seat and crotch.

Easy to wash and iron.

Economical and simple to make.

Not quickly outgrown.

Durable material with a soft, cool texture and sufficient body to look well and require no starch.

Strong workmanship finished smoothly on the inside of the suit.

A pocket placed at hand level for a handkerchief.



WINTER PLAYSUITS AND HEADWEAR

WHETHER the child is to be protected from extreme cold, snow, or chilly rain, the same general type of protective outdoor playsuit is satisfactory. The difference is mainly in choice of material.

In most cases warmth is the first consideration, but this does not necessarily call for heavy fabrics. Contrary to the common idea, some of the warmest outfits are surprisingly lightweight and some of the heaviest are not warm at all. Good playsuit fabrics are also flexible and pliable enough not to interfere with or hamper the movements of the child. Neither will they prickle or irritate the skin at the neck, wrists, and ankles.

A winter playsuit, more than any other garment a child wears, has to be durable. As a protective outfit, it is naturally subjected to a lot of dirt and grime, which will work into and ruin anything except good-quality, closely woven, strong fabrics.

Washable material is the most hygienic and least expensive to keep in good order. However, from the standpoint of warmth, wool fabrics are the



most satisfactory, but some of them have to be dry-cleaned. In some cases, two suits, one of washable material to be worn over the other, makes the practical arrangement shown here. If the outer fabric is tightly woven, it will turn wind, rain, and snow. The inner one, preferably of wool, provides warmth and can be removed on milder days.

Insist on having material so thoroughly shrunk that it can be guaranteed to keep its original shape and size. Also, because an outfit of this kind will always be worn out of doors only colors fast to light as well as to cleaning are practical.

The color of a playsuit should be gay, becoming, and pleasing to the youngster who will wear it. Colorful suits of red, green, and blue do not show soil as readily as do dark colors. Also they are more readily seen by motorists and may help in preventing traffic accidents.

Special finishes are sometimes applied to playsuit fabrics in order to make them water-repellent, wind-proof, or mothproof. The value of these depends upon the conditions under which the suit is used and

how long the finish will last. Certainly a fabric that turns water is desirable in a climate where there is much rain and wet snow, but unless the finish will stand rather frequent cleaning and last as long as the suit, it is not worth the extra cost. It is also well to inquire what kind of cleaning such fabrics require.

Select the type of playsuit that allows full freedom for play and, like the material, provides adequate protection. The design of a playsuit, like the material, can aid in keeping out cold and shedding rain. For children between 2 and 6 years, the one-piece unbelted, loose-fitting playsuits shown on this and the preceding and following pages are the most satisfactory.

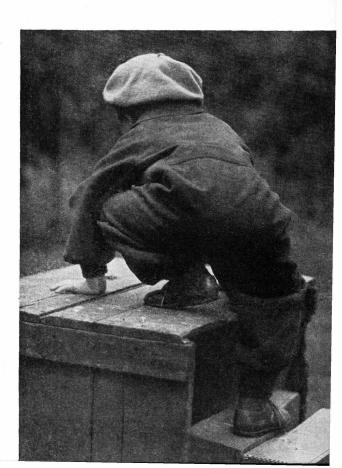
No matter how active the play, a one-piece outfit will not pull apart at the waist and let in cold as do two-piece suits with waist-length jackets. Neither is there unnecessary bulk over the abdomen and about the hips, as in two-piece outfits with longer jackets. Little folks are short in stature and their figures plump so that extra thicknesses about the waist can be a real hindrance to the stooping that is so much a part of their play.

Another advantage of one-piece suits for very little children is that they have none of the discomfort and restriction of elastic about the waist, or of leggings slipping down. While older children are able to adjust clothes that shift, young children are not.

In one-piece playsuits for children it is of special importance to see that ample room is provided for climbing, stooping, and bending, as well as for

reasonable growth. Boxing through the crotch and dart tucks set in both below the waistband and at the side seams in line with the bend of the hips, provide the necessary room in the suit shown at right.

The trousers of a playsuit must have extra width and length in the seat. Otherwise stooping and bending will cause the legs of the suit to draw up and the neck line to pull back against the threat. Wide, roomy legs bloused at the ankle over very stretchy knit bands are good, as the child can then kneel or squat as he likes without the restriction that tires and cramps legs and knees. The only way to be certain that a suit is right in





all these respects is to put it on the child and see how it adjusts itself to his changing positions.

If one is making a suit at home, it is well to try a muslin model and make any necessary changes in fit before cutting into good material. A suit should be bought or made with 2 years' wear in mind. Of course the amount that different children grow in a year's time varies, but the suits that allow the freest activity will also be most adaptable to growth.

There should be an easy, rather loose fit across the back and over the shoulders. If a suit is too close here, the draw comes not only over the back but also across the upper arm. Raglan sleeves with good-sized armholes are helpful in preventing this. They not only allow plenty of arm and shoulder action, but extra sweaters and underwear can be worn on cold days without causing that tight, bundled-up feeling.

A playsuit keeps out more cold when it fits well at the ankles, wrists, and neck. Knit bands that keep their shape but have plenty of stretch are excellent for this purpose, and they require no fasteners. There is considerable difference in the quality of knit bands. Some are so inelastic that they cannot be pulled on and off over shoes. This has proven so troublesome that many suits with these poor-quality bands are now equipped with slide fasteners—

an addition that increases expense, needlessly complicates the suit, and is far less satisfactory than the better quality bands with proper elasticity.

A soft, rolling collar will keep out chilly winds, but it should not stand up enough to restrict the neck and head. The neck line itself should not fit up too close against the throat, or it will be uncomfortable and leave no room for growth.

Playsuits that are easy to put on and take off can be very useful in teaching children self-reliance and skill with their hands. A suit designed so simply that a child cannot possibly be puzzled as to the right way to put it on is a help. Trick closings and useless gadgets are confusing and discouraging to little folk.

A suit with a long center-front opening that extends from the neck down almost to the crotch enables a child to sit down, put his feet through, and then pull the suit up and on without straining or tugging. If it has

an easy-working slide fastener, it can be fastened quickly. These fasteners delight youngsters and, properly used, are a real encouragement to self-help. However, a firm strip of material that will keep its shape and not wrinkle should be stitched in underneath the fastener to keep it from catching and damaging the clothes underneath. The outside flap so often used on readymade suits is not necessary, and it usually makes the fastener harder to manage. Because this flap catches in the fastener it is soon so badly cut and frayed that it is unsightly.

Pockets are a necessity, at least one to hold a handkerchief. This can be placed high on the chest, but two generous ones at hand level are more fun. Every youngster likes to collect a few little treasures in pockets, so they need to be sewed on securely, well reinforced, and placed low enough so that the hands cannot bear down in them. Otherwise they are likely to be torn.

The workmanship on a playsuit should be sturdy, yet the suit should be free of thick, bulky places that tend to stiffen it. Just as the fabric should be pliable, so should the construction lines. Oftentimes these are so heavy that the seams act almost as a framework and hold the suit rigid.

Strong thread and tape reinforcements in such places as through the crotch, under the arms, and beneath pocket corners, are helpful. Sometimes reinforcements applied to the outside at the knees and elbows are needed for extra protection. When these patches wear out, new ones can be applied, whereas if they are on the inside the suit itself gets the wear.

Where winters are very cold and windy, loose-fitting ski hoods that can be adjusted about the face are the best type of head covering for wear with playsuits. They keep the chill away from the neck, and when necessary an extra cap can be worn inside without altering the fit.

Where winters are not so extreme, berets or knit stocking caps are satisfactory. These have no definite front or back, and no fastenings, so even a very young child can put them on right without help. In general, it is well to have a cap that can be pulled down over the ears and rolled up again when less protection is needed. Knitted caps have this advantage, and they will fit any shape of head without pressing uncomfortably on the ears, as may happen with fitted









helmets and hats of woven fabrics. Unless individually fitted, these are likely to restrict head movements also.

Only very soft materials are suitable for headwear, and those with even a slight tendency to prickle the skin should always be lined.

The playsuits designed by the Bureau embody the following points on style, fit, and fabric selection:

Loose styling—preferably a one-piece suit for children between 2 and 6.

Wide raglan sleeves with large armholes that fit easily over sweaters when needed.

Knit wristlets that keep out cold and also hold a loose sleeve in place.

Ample allowance in both length and width for squatting and bending and for growth.

Loose-fitting legs adaptable to growth and held in at the ankles to keep out snow and cold.

A weatherproof center-front opening long enough for the suit to be put on and taken off easily.

A softly rolling neck finish that keeps out cold, but does not restrict head and neck movements in any way.

Good-sized pockets placed at hand level and with slant openings convenient for the natural way of putting hands in pockets.

Firm, lightweight, flexible, softly finished material, suited in warmth to the climate.

A becoming color that will also serve as protection against traffic accidents.

Washable and colorfast to both light and washing.

Headwear with no definite back or front, preferably knit, or else loose fitting.

A SELF-HELP BIB FOR A SMALL CHILD

The simplest yet one of the most useful and indispensable items of a small child's wardrobe is a bib for use at mealtime. Little folk begin very early to show an interest in feeding themselves, and this should be encouraged. Yet the process of learning to eat brings many mishaps, and clothes need to be well protected with bibs designed for the purpose. Makeshifts, such as towels or napkins tied or pinned about the neck, roll up in the way and are an actual hindrance.

A bib should fit up well about the neck, hang straight and smooth across the entire front of the dress or suit, and cover the lap. The best material is absorbent but not bulky, and like other materials recommended for little children needs to be soft and comfortable in texture. Cotton ratine and lightweight terry cloth are examples of suitable material.

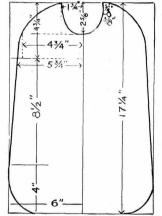
A bib can be even more than a protector of clothes. If designed so that a child can put it on and take it off with little or no help it can be just as effective in teaching self-reliance as is learning to handle a spoon or cup.

The self-help design shown here is cut from a piece of cotton ratine 18 by 12 inches, making it possible to get three bibs from one-half of a yard of 36-inch material. The neck is cut deep and round so as to fit closely.

First, the sides and lower edge are bound with a strip of bias binding; then the neck is finished with another strip of bias, which extends into strings about 19 inches long at each side. After these have been stitched, each is run through an eyelet on the opposite side and a wooden bead or ring attached to each end as a pull.

As the bib is put on, the neck opening can be pulled out so that it slips easily over the head. Then as the child pulls on the beads the bib is drawn up to fit. There is no troublesome tying of strings, no bothering with bib clips. Instead, this simple arrangement for adjusting the bib fascinates the child, and what might be a task for mother is turned into an educational game for the youngster.







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